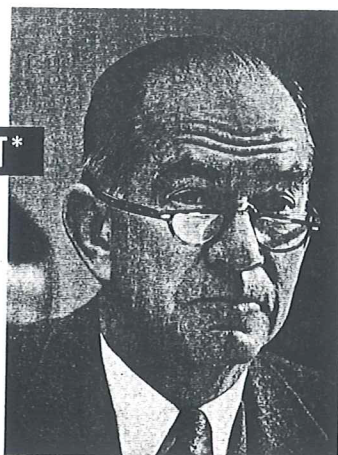


SPEAKING OUT*



Democrat from Arkansas, Senator Fulbright is chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. He was a Rhodes Scholar and at 34 was president of the University of Arkansas. He served one term in the House before his election to the Senate in 1944.

Let's talk sense about Cuba

By Sen. J. William Fulbright

One of the most distinguished members of the Upper House, Senator Fulbright shook Washington recently with a speech attacking the "myths" that underlie U.S. foreign policy. Here he defends himself against his critics and tells in fuller detail what he thinks should be done about Castro's Cuba.

For a long time it has seemed to me that American attitudes toward the world tend to be rigid and slow to adjust to new situations. Thus, for example, we tend to resist change in policies which were developed to deal with a monolithic Sino-Soviet bloc despite the facts that the Chinese and Soviets are now deeply, perhaps irrevocably, split, and that there is a growing trend to diversity in Eastern Europe. There are people who cry for a blockade or other stern measures against Cuba, making no distinction between the problems posed by a Cuba with Soviet medium-range missiles and by a Cuba with Communist workers riding to the cane fields in new British buses.

It was in an effort to point out some of the areas in which change has outrun policy that I spoke in the Senate on March 25. "We are confronted with a complex and fluid world situation," I said, "and we are not adapting ourselves to it. We are clinging to old myths in the face of new realities." I stated, for instance, that Castro "is not likely to be overthrown by any policies which we are now pursuing or can reasonably undertake." I suggested that our efforts to persuade free-world countries to maintain a boycott on trade with Cuba have been largely unsuccessful and that for this reason the boycott policy has been a failure.

My purpose was, and remains, to stimulate a general discussion, a rethinking, and a reevaluation of our foreign policies in the light of changing circumstances. Such criticisms as were contained in my speech were directed at inflexibility in public and congressional thinking about foreign policy, and not at specific policies of the present and preceding Administrations, except as these policies have been thwarted or unduly influenced by popular prejudices.

There is nothing more difficult, and nothing more important, than the adjustment of our thoughts and of our policies to changing realities. As Eric Hoffer has written: "It is my impression

that no one really likes the new. We are afraid of it. . . . Even in slight things the experience of the new is rarely without some stirring or foreboding."

If there was something "new" about my speech of March 25, it was not what was said but the fact that it was said, and said publicly. In any case, reactions of fear and foreboding were largely confined to the Congress. The reaction of the press and of over 10,000 private citizens who wrote letters to me in the first three weeks after the speech was very substantially favorable to the views which I expressed. What is more important, the reaction showed a very substantial interest in a public exploration of the issues which I raised. The voluminous public response indicates to me that the American people are eager for a public discussion and may be receptive to changes in policies.

I welcome the opportunity to examine some of the questions raised in the various comments and criticisms of my speech. I have no objection to being held responsible for anything I said. I do object, however, to being held responsible for things I did not say. I did not say, for example, that American policy is guided solely by myths, or that our policies were inappropriate at the time they were framed. I did not say that we should ourselves enter into friendly relations with the Castro regime in Cuba or terminate our own economic boycott. I said only that our effort to organize a concerted international boycott which eventually will bring down the Communist regime is a failure, which it demonstrably is.

I did say that we should face the probability that the Castro regime will continue to exist. We are, of course, already doing so, and this particular suggestion, therefore, is not the adoption of a new policy so much as the acknowledgment, to ourselves, of an existing fact.

There has been considerable inaccuracy on another point. I did not say that the Castro regime is not a "grave threat" to the hemisphere. I said that it is not a

"grave threat" directly to the United States. I did say that it is a "grave threat" to the Latin-American countries, but one which should and can be dealt with through the procedures of the Organization of American States.

One criticism which has been directed at the speech is that I neglected to state more explicitly what I believe our policy toward Cuba should be. On reflection, I think this criticism may be well taken, because Cuba now appears to have greater importance in the public mind than I had thought.

I believe that the United States under present conditions should maintain its own political and economic boycott of the Castro regime. It would be desirable if all the other countries of the free world would join in such a boycott, but experience has amply proved that major industrialized countries of Europe, and Japan as well, are unwilling to do so and that we are incapable of either forcing or persuading them to do so. We look silly when we cut off a pittance of military aid to Great Britain and France because they trade with Cuba, when at the same time we find an excuse to continue substantial aid to Spain despite its trade with Cuba. What makes the case even sillier is that the "aid" we were giving to Britain and France was not aid at all. It was called aid because it came from military-assistance appropriations, but in fact it paid for a sales-promotion campaign to persuade high-ranking British and French officers to buy American military equipment.

There is an important distinction to be made between Cuba and Western Europe on the one hand and Cuba and Latin America on the other. Cuba is not a grave threat to Western Europe, any more than it is a serious threat directly to the United States. But Cuba is a grave threat to Latin America. It is logical, therefore, to expect the Latin-American reaction to Cuba to be different from the European reaction, and this has indeed been the case. The Organization of American

States has found the Castro regime to be incompatible with the principles of the inter-American system, and Cuba has been excluded from the inter-American organization. Fourteen of the Latin-American states have broken diplomatic relations with Cuba. There has been increasing inter-American cooperation in the exchange of intelligence and in the application of countersubversive measures. Latin-American trade with Cuba, over all, is insignificant.

Nonetheless, Cuban intervention in the affairs of Latin-American states has continued, the most flagrant example being the shipment of arms to Venezuela, a shipment which was fully confirmed and documented by a committee of the O.A.S.

The O.A.S. is the deliberately chosen instrument of the American states to deal with these problems. It has available to it adequate procedures and powers, based on the Rio treaty and the charter of the Organization of American States. I believe the United States should fully meet its obligations under these treaties to participate in multilateral action to protect the hemisphere from Soviet-Cuban aggression and subversion. But this is primarily a Latin-American problem. We cannot protect people who are not interested in protecting themselves.

The real problems of this hemisphere are not going to be solved by boycotting Cuba but by making the Alliance for Progress a success. Our exaggerated preoccupation with Cuba has distorted our judgment of the revolutionary movements in several Latin-American countries. If Castro and his henchmen were to disappear tomorrow, much of Latin America would still be stirred by demands for radical social change.

This change need not be brought about through totalitarian methods and controls. In fact, the example of Castro's Cuba has perhaps done more to turn Latin Americans away from Communism than all our preaching about its evils. Latin Americans have been shocked by

*One measure of a democracy's strength is the freedom of its citizens to speak out—to dissent from the popular view. Although the editors often disagree with the opinions expressed in Speaking Out, they dedicate the series to that freedom.

Speaking Out

Castro's brutality as well as by an inefficiency that has made a shambles of the Cuban economy.

Despite the importance of these considerations, it was not my major purpose in my statement of March 25 to stimulate a debate on Cuba but rather to place this issue in a reasonable perspective. The problems of the Caribbean are difficult; but unless they are made the focus of a clash of interests between the great powers, as in the missile confrontation of 1962, they are not in themselves the issues which are likely to precipitate a third world war or to determine the shape of world politics in the decades to come.

The problems which are much more likely to be decisive stem from our relations with the two great powers of the Communist world and our relations with our free-world allies. It was with respect to these problems—the supreme issues of our time—that I sought to provoke discussion, and to suggest that, when placed in perspective, such issues as Cuba have engaged our attention to a degree out of all proportion to their real importance. For example, I spoke of the "myth . . . that every Communist state is an unmitigated evil and a relentless enemy of the free world," and I pointed to "the reality . . . that some Communist regimes pose a threat to the free world while others pose little or none, and that if we will recognize these distinctions, we ourselves will be able to influence events in the Communist bloc in a way favorable to the security of the free world."

One of the criticisms of my speech is that I did not explore the problems of the Western Alliance and particularly the increasing differences of opinion between General de Gaulle and the other members of the western community.

My basic belief is that the best hope for the North Atlantic democracies lies in the development, by gradual stages, of a close political, military and economic partnership. If the western community of nations is to survive and prosper, its prospects for doing so depend heavily on its overcoming its ancient rivalries and animosities and uniting its member nations in a close working partnership.

Impressive progress toward the development of such a partnership was made from the end of World War II until quite recently—through the Marshall Plan, the NATO alliance, the formation of the European Economic Community and of a variety of international financial institutions, and other steps. In the last few years France, under General de Gaulle, has pursued policies which are apparently aimed at quite different objectives, although it is not yet clear what these objectives are. The tendency of current French policy, if I gauge it correctly, is away from partnership with other nations, particularly Great Britain and the United States, and back toward the kind of nationalism that has divided the West against itself in centuries past. In many ways French policy is being skillfully, even brilliantly, executed, and many highly informed observers have come to the conclusion that the Gaullist concept of a European community of sovereign nations, vaguely and loosely bound to each other and separated from Great Britain and the United States, represents the "wave of the future."

Perhaps it does. Efforts to assess the realism and the prospects of General de Gaulle's program, however, are handicapped by the fact that it is extremely

difficult to grasp the true meaning of the general's statements. We have been told that the postwar era is at an end and that the Gaullist design is built on that reality; that the Atlantic-partnership idea is only a disguise for American "hegemony" in Europe; that this "hegemony," which is equated with Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, is intolerable and must soon end; that France and Europe (the terms seem to be used interchangeably) have a destiny and "personality" of their own which must not be diluted by "Anglo-Saxon" admixtures; and that Europe must aspire to be "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals."

In its present state of definition Gaullism seems more a mystique than a program. It may be that President de Gaulle, in his own good time, will give content to his vision of Europe and of the world. It may be that he will go beyond elegant disquisitions on the pride and personality of nations and proceed to suggest the kind of continuing institutions that will bind together the European nations, firmly or loosely, and the kind of political and economic relations he feels Europe should have with the United States and the British Commonwealth.

It may be, as the general has suggested, that the NATO alliance has served its purpose and is obsolete. I do not think so, nor do I think that NATO is a disguise for American "hegemony" in Europe. In any case, whether or not NATO survives in its present form, it is essential that provision be made for close and continuing cooperation among the nations of the West, lest they revert to the uncontrolled nationalism that all but destroyed Europe in two World Wars. There are two constructive proposals for long-range cooperation that can be implemented with little delay: the seaborne multi-lateral force and the proposed consultative Atlantic Assembly. If these are unacceptable to France, perhaps General de Gaulle will propose a better approach.

It is inconceivable that France should be anything less than a leading participant in an Atlantic community. France's partners are in need of her wisdom and her vision—the same wisdom which enabled President de Gaulle to end the Algerian war and to make France the guarantor of order and economic growth in large areas of Africa and, indeed, in proportion to her resources, the leading nation of the free world in extending economic aid to underdeveloped countries. Many Frenchmen have feared that France cannot be herself as a participant in a larger community. They would do well to consider that the free world, of which France is an integral part, can have little chance of realizing the full measure of its hopes and opportunities without the participation of France.

The foregoing are some, although certainly not all, of the questions raised by the criticisms of my speech of March 25. I hope that these exchanges are only the beginning of a national rethinking of foreign policy and of a new receptiveness on the part of our people and their policy makers to new ideas and fresh approaches. In a free debate in which no proposal is barred because of its unfamiliarity or its incompatibility with prevailing prejudices, there is certain to be a good deal of error as well as insight. But this need not trouble us. As Thomas Jefferson said, "Error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it."

Joe Foweraker